



MEETING MINUTES

Committee name	Hunter Water Customer and Community Advisory Group (CCAG)
Date and time	Tuesday 17 June 2025
Location	Hunter Water's Grahamstown Water Treatment Works and Grahamstown Dam

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cr Brian Adamthwaite	Lake Macquarie City Council (Chair)
Ms Sue Johns	National Seniors Association
Cr Deahnna Richardson	City of Newcastle
Cr Mark Mason	Cessnock City Council
Cr Warrick Penfold	Maitland City Council
Cr Michael Dowling	Dungog Shire Council
Cr Peter Francis	Port Stephens Council
Mr David Beins	

APOLOGIES

Ms Thea Bray	Public Interest Advocacy Centre
Mr Douglas McCloskey	Public Interest Advocacy Centre
Ms Linda Bowden	Save the Williams River Coalition
Mr Glenn Lyons	Local Land Services
Ms Jean McGarry	Lake Macquarie Sustainable Neighbourhoods Alliance
Dr Craig Evans	The University of Newcastle
Mr Graham Jones	Maitland Masonic Centre
Ms Emma Berry	Executive Manager, Strategy & Engagement

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Darren Cleary	Managing Director
Mr Declan Clausen	Group Manager Strategy & External Affairs
Ms Laura Boland	Stakeholder and Government Relations Advisor (CCAG Secretary)

WELCOME

The Chair opened the meeting at 9.30 am and provided an Acknowledgment of Country.

Apologies were received and noted.

OVERVIEW OF AGENDA AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil conflicts of interest were declared.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The March 2025 meeting minutes were adopted as a true and correct record of the meeting.

TOUR OF GRAHAMSTOWN WATER TREATMENT WORKS

- **Samantha Barry – Senior Project Manager, and Dan Slocombe – Veolia**

Ms Barry and Mr Slocombe led CCAG members on a tour and discussion about the operation of the Grahamstown Water Treatment Plant and recent upgrades.

Members discussed the water treatment process, including coagulation, flocculation, and sedimentation, followed by filtration and treatment with chlorine, fluoride, and lime in a closely regulated process.

Hunter Water is currently commissioning an additional treatment process using UV light to provide an additional barrier of protection against residual microorganisms.

Members also discussed contingency planning for emergency events and water quality issues.

HUNTER WATER OPERATIONAL UPDATE

- **Darren Cleary – Managing Director**

Mr Cleary noted that **water storages** are currently at capacity following significant rainfall in April and May 2025.

Mr Cleary noted that the **IPART's final report on Hunter Water's pricing proposal** for 2025-2030 was delivered today, and noted that it aligns with Hunter Water's proposed approach. Hunter Water received an 'Advanced' rating from IPART for its pricing proposal, largely due to strong community engagement in forming the pricing proposal.

Construction of the Belmont Desalination Plant is progressing, with piling and site elevation works underway. Increased vehicle activity is expected near the Fernleigh Awabakal Shared Track during the next phases of construction.

Members asked whether the desalination plant will operate remotely or be staffed. Mr Cleary noted that it will be an automated system with multiple modes of operation, which is especially useful when dam levels are low. During full operation, it will be staffed 24/7 due to safety risks associated with high-pressure systems.

Infrastructure refurbishment work is underway on six drinking water reservoirs to ensure the structures are safe and water quality is maintained, including protection against pests and vermin.

Six key reservoir upgrade projects are underway at: Morisset; Arcadia Vale; Harpers Hill between Lochinvar and Greta; The Hill Reservoir in Newcastle; Cameron Park and West Wallsend; and North Lambton.

Upgrades include structural repairs, relining, roof replacements, and increased storage capacity.

Heavy rainfall in April and May caused: regional flooding; dam safety alerts at Chichester Dam; controlled releases from Grahamstown Dam; and wastewater system overflows in low-lying areas. Both dams have since returned to normal operating levels.

Mr Cleary discussed Hunter Water's response to recent flooding events, in which the dams experienced some of the highest flows ever recorded.

Members asked if staff were present at Chichester Dam during flooding. Mr Cleary noted that staff are required at Chichester Dam 24/7 during flooding events.

Members raised concerns that some community members downstream of Chichester Dam are unsure when and where to evacuate, as there is perception that evacuation routes may differ depending on the type of emergency. Further information was requested on how evacuation orders are determined and communicated. Mr Cleary noted that emergency alerts and evacuation orders are communicated by the NSW SES as per the protocols in the Dam Safety Emergency Plan.

Members asked whether Hunter Water could undertake preventative releases from dams ahead of wet weather. Mr Cleary explained that flood mitigation is not built into the dam operations. Members noted that some community members believe Hunter Water causes flooding, and further education is needed to address this misconception.

Overflow events across the Lower Hunter are increasing during significant storm events. Mr Cleary noted that wet weather overflows are difficult to prevent entirely, but that funding has been allocated to hotspot areas where repeated overflows occur.

\$125,000 in Love Water Grants were awarded to local organisations promoting water conservation and sustainability. A total of 76 applications were received across all LGAs. Projects included water tanks, gardens, irrigation systems and education programs.

Members asked about the future of the **Lostock Dam to Glennies Creek Dam Pipeline Project**, which has been paused. Mr Cleary noted that Hunter Water is focusing on desalination and dam upgrades instead to ensure water security for the Lower Hunter.

Mr Cleary's presentation is available on the [CCAG webpage](#).

FORMATION OF THE STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- **Laura Boland – Stakeholder and Government Relations Advisor**
- **Declan Clausen – Group Manager Strategy and External Affairs**

Members were provided with a copy of the Stakeholder Advisory Forum (SAF) Charter for review and comment. Members were encouraged to renominate to join the SAF or to consider nominating a new representative from their organisation.

Ms Boland noted that Councillors on the CCAG will remain on the SAF, while all other members will be encouraged to renominate if eligible.

Member feedback on the types of interest groups listed in the SAF Charter was noted and adopted.

TOUR OF GRAHAMSTOWN DAM

- **Jarrod Wynn – Manager Civil Engineering**
- **Dan Turnbull - Dam Safety Engineer Lead**

Mr Wynn and Mr Turnbull led a discussion on the general operation of Grahamstown Dam, including an update on dam safety works and earthquake risks.

Mr Turnbull noted that Hunter Water is installing seismic sensors to enable quicker detection of and response to earthquakes near the dam.

Members asked about the timing of community information sessions on dam safety at Chichester Dam. Mr Wynn advised that sessions are currently being planned.

NEXT MEETING

This meeting concluded the CCAG. The Chair acknowledged members for their service and contribution, and thanked Hunter Water for the quality of the discussion and tours.

The new Stakeholder Advisory Forum will meet for the first time on 13 October 2025.